

REMARKS

The subject further preliminary amendment is respectfully submitted for consideration by the Office. Attention is directed to Applicant's copending applications, namely, related U.S. Pat. Appl. Ser. No. 10/566,786 entitled WEAPON GRIP ASSEMBLY, a continuation-in-part of the instant application, and unrelated U.S. Pat. Appl. Ser. No. 11/573,026 entitled AN INTERFACE APPARATUS FOR MOUNTING A PORTABLE ILLUMINATION TOOL & RELATED ILLUMINATION ASSEMBLY.

Accompanying the subject filing is an Information Disclosure Statement. Consideration of the references listed therein is respectfully requested.

In connection to the subject prosecution, as well as that of the cited copending application, more particularly, in furtherance of identifying allowable subject matter with regard to the present, further preliminary amendment and securing a first action allowance, undersigned would be pleased to interview the case. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests an interview pursuant to 37 CFR §1.133 and MPEP §713 III, more particularly, pursuant to 37 CFR §1.133(a) and MPEP §713.02 for such purpose and to the extent that objections/rejections are contemplated or intended to be asserted. In as much as a first action has yet to issue, with the subject filing being a national phase filing of international PCT application US/03/35601, an International Search Report, Written Opinion and International Preliminary Examination Report are

available.

Of published claims 43-65, claims 63 and 65 are cancelled without prejudice, claim 65 in response to an election requirement. Of the amended claims, claims 43, 58, 60-62, and 64 have been amended for the sake of clarity, with claims 56 & 57 re-written in independent form. Of newly added claims 66-83, claim 66 is the sole independent claim. New independent claim 66 generally tracks with claim 43, and emphasizes a relationship between and among the accessory module and hand grip as will be later discussed. Newly added dependent claims 67-83 generally track with/respond to claims 44-55 and 58-62.

Subject Matter of the Independent Claims: 43, 56, 57, 64 & 66

All independent claims, namely, claims 43, 56, 57, 64 and newly added claim 66 are directed to a vertical weapon grip assembly for attachment to an unaltered host weapon that is characterized by either an accessory module (claim 43 & 66), a light module (claims 56 & 57), or a target illumination device (claim 64). An overview of each of said claims follows.

Claim 43 is generally directed to a multipurpose vertical forend grip characterized by, among other things, an accessory module supported by a portion of a hand grip. **Claims 56 and 57**, each of which has been re-written in independent form, require a light module to either reside in a plane exterior of a plane delimited by the hand grip of the assembly (claim 56), or to be

vertically off-set from a longitudinal centerline of the hand grip of the assembly (claim 57). **Claim 64** is generally directed to a tactical weapon grip assembly characterized by, among other things, an actuatable weapon receiving structure, and a target illumination device supported by a portion of the handle of the assembly. Finally, **claim 66** is generally directed to a multipurpose vertical forend grip characterized by, among other things, an accessory module supported by a portion of a hand grip so as to be side mounted with respect thereto.

Applicant's Claimed Subject Matter & References of Record

Preliminarily, Applicant has addressed shortcomings associated with combined weapon systems, namely, weapon systems characterized by a grenade launching functionality. With a "front-heavy" combined weapon system, and limited hand positioning and/or orientation owing to the forend of such system, it should be readily appreciated that such weapon system is hard to control, and is fatiguing to carry, as well as operate. Beyond this contextual setting, it should be noted that a "support solution" for such weapon system is inherently and greatly constrained by structural/functional "givens" of the launcher, and more generally the system. Moreover, Applicant sought, and provides a solution wherein the weapon system, including components thereof, are neither modified nor altered, thereby providing an especially advantageous forend support solution in the context of an

"unaltered" host weapon. Other unaltered or minimally altered solutions of Applicant are noted/referenced in respect of "supplemental" devices, see for example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,930,935, 6,134,823, and 6,453,594, as well as published international applications WO 2006/050163 A1 and WO 2007/067569 A1.

It is respectfully submitted that no single reference of record discloses all the features of the independent claims. Moreover, it is further submitted that elements, and/or the interrelationships therebetween, of each of the independent claims are neither shown nor fairly suggested by a combination of the references of record.

Of the references of record, only **Chandler et al.** appears to teach a vertical forend grip assembly which includes an accessory module. Numerous references teach fixtures or accessories which are mountable to an altered weapon system, namely, accessories adapted for receipt upon a rail of a weapon system equipped with a rail system (e.g., the ubiquitous Picatinny rail), see e.g., Kim '069, Kim '810, Oz '214, Kim Appl. '345. None teach a vertical forend grip assembly which includes an accessory module, and all require alteration of the host weapon/weapon system.

Of the references of record, numerous teach light mounts for handguns (see e.g., Capps III '703, Teetzel '105, Christiansen '683, Fell et al. '875, and Solinsky et al. Appl. '374), devices quite different and apart from a vertical forend grip assembly for

integration with a forend of an unaltered host weapon system. Moreover, each of said references show/provide a system configuration wherein the light is positioned within a plane that includes the weapon barrel, trigger and grip.

With regard to Chandler et al., a molded plastic structure for fastening to a barrel of a Thompson sub-machine gun is provided, more particularly, a flash-sight attachment 5 characterized by a light housing 7 extending from an integral handgrip 8 (FIGS. 3, 4). The upper surface of the attachment includes groove 6 for mating with bar 3 depending from barrel 2 via lug 48, with screw 10 passing through handgrip 8 for fastening the aligned attachment to the bar via aperture 4.

Chandler et al. lack Applicant's accessory positioning, and/or relationship between and among the accessory module and hand grip. First, Chandler et al. lack *ab initio* an accessory module supported by a portion of the hand grip (claims 43, 56, 57, 64, and 66, i.e., all independent claims), instead disclosing that the light housing is an integral forward extension of the hand grip. Second, Chandler et al. lack either: a light module residing in a plane exterior of a plane delimited by the hand grip (claim 56); a light module vertically off-set from a longitudinal centerline of the hand grip (claim 57); and/or, an accessory module supported by a portion of the hand grip so as to be side mounted with respect thereto (claim 66).

Moreover, Chandler et al. lack a weapon receiving fixture extending from a hand grip as required of Applicant's device of claims 43, 56, 57 and 66, instead teaching groove 6 integral to upper portion of the molded article. Finally, Chandler et al. further lack an actuatable weapon receiving structure, let alone an actuatable weapon receiving structure adapted for tensioned engagement with a portion of the weapon, as required of Applicant's device of claim 64, instead, and as previously noted, teaching a groove, i.e., a passive weapon receiving structure.

With regard to claims 44-55 and 58-63, each of which depends at least indirectly from independent claim 43, claims 44-55 further emphasize or modify the nature of the accessory; claims 58 and 59 further emphasize or modify the nature of the hand grip; and, claims 60-63 further emphasize or modify the nature of the weapon receiving fixture. With regard to claims 67-83, as previously noted, they generally correspond to claims 44-55, and 58-62.

Thus, for the various and plural stated reasons, it is respectfully submitted that each set of claims characterized by independent claims 43, 56, 57, 64 and 66 (i.e., claims 43-55; claim 56; claim 57; claim 58-62; claim 64; and claims 66-83) are patentably distinct from the references of record, and thus, in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

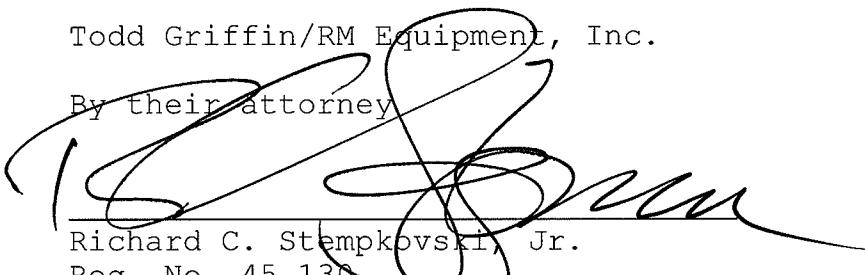
Early consideration and swift allowance is solicited.

Please charge any deficiencies or credit any over payment to
Deposit Account 14-0620.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Griffin/RM Equipment, Inc.

~~By their attorney~~


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